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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
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MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: OTHER ISSUES

Elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/29 of 24 July 1995 on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Secretary-General prepared a comprehensive report, including a synthesis, on the views expressed in accordance with paragraph 5 of that resolution (E/CN.6/1996/10). After the report was completed, the views of the Governments of Cuba and China were received. They are reported below.

2. Cuba observed that, in keeping with the attention and priority given to women's issues in the country, the question of introducing the right of petition through an optional protocol to the Convention was being considered by the relevant authorities of the country with a view to determining the position which Cuba would take in the working group that was to meet during the fortieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to be held in March 1996.

3. The Cuban Government was also giving constant attention to examining its existing mechanisms and procedures in the light of international human rights instruments, particularly those dealing with women's human rights. To that end, a comprehensive evaluation of the feasibility of an optional protocol was being made at the national level, involving a joint effort in which all institutions concerned with women's issues in Cuba were participating.

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4. Cuba also noted that, in the course of national consideration of the issue, particular attention would be paid to existing mechanisms, in order to ensure that the decisions ultimately taken made a real and substantive contribution to the handling of human rights issues without unnecessary duplication.

5. China stated that, since the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights had already established special mechanisms to review communications and since the United Nations was practising thrift, another mechanism, such as an optional protocol, might cause a duplication of work and duties and a waste of human and financial resources. Those would certainly add an extra load to the United Nations heavy financial burden. The Secretary-General was requested to give serious consideration to the above-mentioned facts.

6. In accordance with resolution 1995/29 of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on the Status of Women should establish an in-session open-ended working group at its fortieth session to consider the report of the Secretary-General with a view to elaborating a draft optional protocol to the Convention. Considering that an optional protocol would be legally binding on the States parties and should reflect their views, it was recommended that a drafting group of experts from the States parties to the Convention be set up. The composition of the drafting group should fully embody the principle of equitable and geographical representation. When the drafting group had worked out a draft optional protocol, it should distribute the draft to the States parties to solicit comments from all sides.